

May 17, 1966

Mr. Russel Wiggins  
Editor in Chief  
Washington Post  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wiggins:

David Hamburg called me after talking to Mr. Meyer, to confirm our appointment for Friday afternoon, 4 p.m. He suggested I mail you some explanatory material, and I hope this can reach you in time to be of help.

I should explain some of the explanation. The article "Experimental Genetics and Human Evolution" was written for a rather technical audience and will appear in a centennial issue of "American Naturalist"; some of the jargon needs to be revised to make it legible to the 'Bulletin of Atomic Scientists'. I leave it now because it is a rather comprehensive statement of my most passionate concerns about the impact of science, and can tell you something about the social and ethical platform of my thinking. I do not know when I would be ready to press some of the more detailed extrapolations (like my prophecy of vegetative reproduction). I would probably wait until some more concrete milestones were laid down in contemporary scientific progress and use these as they arise to support whatever commentary they validate. And of course the actual outcome of biomedical research, week by week, is quite unpredictable.

The piece on the misinterpretation of Mariner IV was written in the form of a letter to the editor, but should be reasonably typical of the style of writing I might use in the columns. However, these should be much more casual, dealing with one small point at a time; the cumulative impact of such a series should stimulate more thoughtful debate than a few shrill yelps of anguish.

Looking forward to meeting you.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

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